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United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Letter dated 25 January 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Cuba and the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Joint Cuban-Russian Declaration in Support of the United Nations, adopted in Moscow on 18 January 1999 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a General Assembly document, under agenda items 30, 59 and 60.

(Signed) Rafael **Dausá Céspedes**
Ambassador
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(*Signed*) Sergei **Lavrov**
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Annex

Joint Cuban-Russian Declaration in Support of the United Nations, adopted in Moscow on 18 January 1999

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Cuba, on behalf of their Governments, expressed their support for the United Nations as a unique universal international organization, responsible for uniting the efforts of the international community for the purpose of finding common approaches to the settlement of conflicts, offering collective responses to new global challenges, strengthening the system of international security and stability embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, promoting strict compliance with the guiding principles of international law, and guaranteeing sustainable economic development.

Pointing out that for over 50 years the United Nations has been playing the pivotal role in world affairs, the Ministers stressed that in today's world it is precisely this Organization that reflects the tendency to realize and strengthen the emerging potential of multipolarity in the modern world.

The Parties reiterated their conviction that, even though international relations are contentious and constructive at the same time, the fact that they are evolving towards multipolarity and approaching the ideals and objectives of the United Nations, as enunciated in the Charter, is promoting the establishment of a balanced, stable, democratic and conflict-free international system, on the basis of the principles of international law and of the Charter, which are an objective reflection of the vital interests of States, irrespective of size, might, or political, economic or social structure.

The Ministers expressed deep concern over efforts to subvert the system of international relations established after the Second World War on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They stressed that the principle of refraining from the use or threat of force or any other means of coercion or compulsion set forth in the Charter was binding, must be observed by all States and entailed a categorical prohibition on the use of any military-coercive action or any other type of action such as blockades, embargoes or other measures not approved by the international community. Exceptions to that prohibition are clearly and expressly stated in the Charter itself. Under the articles of the Charter, only the Security Council is empowered to approve the application of enforcement measures with a view to maintaining and restoring international peace and security.

The Parties are convinced that any attempt to circumvent the Security Council disrupts the existing mechanism for the maintenance of peace, causes chaos in international affairs and establishes the primacy of force over international law.

The Parties noted that one of the most important means of consolidating the role and prestige of the United Nations in the twenty-first century would be to reform the Organization in a rational, careful and thoughtful manner, bearing in mind the realities of today's world, so as to preserve its operating mechanisms whose effectiveness has been demonstrated in practice.

An important part in the process of United Nations reform must be played by improvements in the functioning of the Security Council. The Council's cardinal responsibility, as provided in the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security is not to be challenged under any circumstances. Any decision to expand the Security Council should, in the opinion of the Parties, be based on strict adherence to the principle of equitable geographical representation and should be based on broad agreement,

preferably on consensus among the States Members of the United Nations. At the same time, it is necessary to consider with the utmost seriousness any measures that would mean greater transparency in the work of the Security Council, since it operates on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations. Reform of the Council would help to make its work more effective and win it greater support from the international community.

The Ministers also expressed their conviction that the methods of work of the United Nations General Assembly must be improved.

The Ministers reiterated that support for the United Nations and the multilateral strengthening of the Organization were at the cornerstone of the foreign policies of the Russian Federation and Cuba.